

The Issue Of Hakimiyyah In The Qur'an

AL-FATIHA 2

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. (2)

The last part of this verse, “**Lord of all the worlds**”, expresses the belief in absolute universal Godhead which is at the very core of the Islamic concept of Allah. Allah is the sole, absolute and ultimate owner with full independent authority to act in the whole cosmos. He is the overall supreme master who has created the world and continues to watch over it, take care of it, and

ensure its stability and well-being. This living and dynamic relationship between the Creator and the created is the perpetual fountain of life for all creation. Allah has not created the world and abandoned it to its own devices. He continues to be an active living authority over His creation, giving it what it needs for its continued and meaningful life. This applies to all Allah's creation.

Acknowledging Allah's absolute Lordship makes all the difference between clarity and confusion with regard to Allah's absolute oneness. People often combined their acknowledgement of Allah as the sole creator with belief in multiple deities having authority in their life. It may seem absurd that people should ever hold such a belief, but this was true in the past and is still true today. The Qur'ān speaks of those who claim that they *"only worship them [minor Gods] so that they may bring us nearer to Allah."* (Zumar 39: 3)

It also mentions that some Jewish and Christian groups who *"have taken their rabbis and priests as Gods alongside Allah."* (Tawbah 9: 31)

Polytheism, or the worship of several deities or demigods besides the perceived 'Grand Deity', was widespread when Islam emerged in the 7th century in Arabia.

The affirmation of the absolute sovereignty and active authority of the One Allah over all creation was necessary to ensure man's rationality and peace of mind, and to relieve him from the cruel bewilderment of polytheism. Man must be reassured that a vigilant and caring Allah is in charge of this world and will never abandon or forsake it.

AL-BAQARAH 165-167

Yet there are people who worship beings other than Allah, giving them a status equal to His, loving them as Allah alone should be loved; whereas the believers love Allah more than all else. If the unbelievers could but see, as see they will when they are made to suffer, that all might belongs to Allah alone, and that He is stern in retribution. (165)

[On that day] those who were followed will disown their followers and they all shall see their punishment, while all their ties are severed. (166)

The followers will say, 'Would that we had another chance so that we can disown them as they have disowned us!' Thus will Allah show them their works [in a way which causes them] bitter regrets. They shall never come out of the fire. (167)

Were these transgressors to look ahead to the Day of Resurrection, they

would realize their folly in worshipping anything or anybody other than Allah. All power belongs to Him. He has neither equals nor partners. They would also see the hopelessness of their actions and the severity of the punishment awaiting them. The leaders shall disassociate themselves from their followers, and shall be exposed as powerless to help them, or even help themselves. The truth of Allah's oneness and His absolute power would be clearly manifest. The followers, on the other hand, would wish for a second chance of life in order to denounce and disown those false Gods and leaders. The full extent of the fraud and the delusion under which they had been living would be exposed.

It is an awesome scene in which all the hypocrisy and the insincerity and futility of the relationship between the two groups is brought fully into the open. And then come the pain and the torment: *"Thus will Allah show them their works [in a way which causes them] bitter regrets. They shall never come out of the fire."* (Baqara 2/167)

AI-BAQARAH 213

All mankind were once one single community. Then Allah sent forth Prophets to give them good tidings and to warn them, and with them He sent down the Book, setting forth the truth, to judge between people over all on which they differed. Yet none other than those who had been given the Book started, out of injustice to one another, to dispute it after clear evidence of the truth had come to them. Allah, by His will, guided the believers to the truth concerning which they had differed. Allah guides whom He will to the straight path. (213)

Differences of ability and function lead to differences in perception, outlook, interests, approach and method. These differences and variations, however, are harmonized and regulated within the wide, all-embracing framework of the divine order of faith where abilities, faculties and resources are given the best chance to grow and develop for the good of the individual and the community, as well as for the benefit of humanity at large. However, it is essential that there should be a proper and valid by which differences and divisions may be judged and evaluated. Such a point of reference is alluded to in the surah when it says that Allah: *"sent down the Book, setting forth the truth, to judge between people over all on which they differed."* (Baqara 2/213)

It is worth pausing here to consider the statement that the Book is *"setting forth the truth..."* This is an affirmation that the Book, the revelation from Allah to mankind, has come with the definitive and absolute truth. It is the ultimate, pre-eminent and sole arbiter and judge of all human thought and

behaviour. Without this authority society would be at a loss, life would descend into chaos, confusion and strife, and mankind would know no peace or happiness.

This is vital in determining the source of human values, thought and understanding, and for defining the laws that govern human relations. The source is Allah, and Allah alone, who has sent down revelations, the Book, to establish the truth and maintain harmony, justice and peace in the world...

The fact is that it was necessary for a definite and firm standard to exist as a reference point for all mankind. It was likewise necessary that this standard should come from a source above the human mind and independent from it. It had to come from an impartial source, not encumbered or swayed by human prejudices or shortcomings.

Such a responsibility requires an infinite and comprehensive knowledge of past, present and future events, not restricted by the limitations of time and space. It also requires perfection, total self-sufficiency, and freedom from all the needs, instincts, ambitions, desires and fears that constrain and control human beings. It can then be given only by Allah who is influenced neither by personal purpose, prejudice or desire, nor by weakness or shortcoming.

This argument gives rise to another fundamental aspect of the Islamic view of human history. Islam considers the Book revealed by Allah as a criterion and an arbiter for mankind, a foundation for human life on which it can rise or fall. Society will progress and improve as long as it adheres to the teachings of Allah's Book, and it will falter and deviate when it neglects them, even if this was the choice of the majority in society. Right and wrong are not to be decided by human individuals or through a ballot box. The Islamic view is that the norms, traditions, systems, and laws people may adopt and accept as a way of life for human society at any particular time in history have no merit or consistency if they are at variance or in contradiction with Allah's Book. The whole philosophy on which such a way of life is based would be discredited, no matter how durable it might prove in practice...

AL-I IMRAN 18

Allah Himself bears witness, and so do the angels and men of knowledge, that there is no deity save Him, the Executor of Justice. There is no deity save Him, the Almighty, the Wise. (18)

We are required to accept this basic fact of Allah being the only Lord and Sustainer of the whole universe. Our acceptance is manifested primarily by our submitting ourselves to Allah alone and referring to Him in all matters. It is further manifested by obeying Allah, our Eternal Master, and following His

messenger and implementing His revelations in our lives.

This is the purport of the Divine Statement: **“The only true faith acceptable to Allah is [man’s] self-surrender to Him.” (Al-i Imran 3/19)** He does not accept any other religion or creed from anyone. Islam means willing submission, obedience and conscious following of the Prophet. This means that the religion which Allah accepts from people is not merely a concept formulated in their minds, nor is it the mere acceptance of a fact. It is, indeed, the practical translation of this acceptance and that concept. It takes the form of implementing the Divine method in all our affairs, total obedience to all Allah’s laws, and following the guidance of His messenger in His implementation of the Divine Faith.

The passage then moves on to publicise the attitude of the people of earlier revelations, wondering at them. Despite their claim that they follow Allah’s religion, some of them turn away when they are invited to put their disputes forward to be adjudged according to Allah’s revelations. Their whole claim is thus rendered baseless. Allah accepts no religion other than Islam, and Islam means true submission to Allah, obedience to His Prophet and the implementation of His revelations in all spheres of life.

We are then told of the real reason for their turning away, which actually means that they do not believe in the Divine religion. That is, they do not take seriously the concept of reckoning and reward on the Day of Judgement: **“For they claim: ‘The fire will most certainly not touch us except for a limited number of days.’” (Al-i Imran 3/24)** In this, they rely on their belief that they are followers of a Divine book: **“They are deceived in their own faith by the false beliefs they used to invent.” (Al-i Imran 3/24)**

Their whole notion is a false delusion. They are neither followers of a Divine book nor are they believers. They have nothing whatsoever to do with the Divine faith, since they are being invited to put their disputes to the judgement of Divine revelations, but they continue to turn away. In such absolute clarity, Allah states in the Qur’an the meaning of religion and the true nature of being religious. He accepts from His servants only one clear view: namely, the true religion is Islam, which means self-surrender. In practice, Islam means to consider Allah’s book as the final arbiter and to accept its judgement. Anyone who does not do this in practice cannot be considered a Muslim, even though he may claim to be so or may claim to follow Allah’s religion. It is Allah who defines and explains His own religion. His definition and explanation does not take into account the desires or personal concepts of human beings.

Indeed, the one who takes the unbelievers, i.e. those who do not accept the judgement of Allah’s book and revelations, as patrons, **“He who does this has cut himself off from Allah.” (Al-i Imran 3/28)** There is absolutely no relationship between him and Allah. This applies to those who patronise and

support or seek the patronage or support of the unbelievers who reject the judgement of Divine revelations, even though they may claim to follow Allah's religion...

The passage concludes with a decisive statement that Islam means true obedience to Allah and His Messenger. The way to win Allah's pleasure is simply to follow His Messenger. Allah's love cannot be earned by the mere mental acceptance of His existence, nor simply by any verbal acknowledgement of that: "Say: 'If you love Allah, follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Much-Forgiving, Merciful.' Say: 'Obey Allah and the messenger.' If they turn their backs, Allah does not love the unbelievers." (Al-i Imran 3/31-32) The issues then are very clear: either obedience and conscious following of the Prophet, which is what Allah likes, or rejection of the faith, which is what Allah dislikes. There can be no meeting point between the two...

Allah's testimony that there is no deity except Him is given here as a prelude to outlining what it entails. Since He Himself stresses His oneness, He, therefore, does not accept from His servants anything other than pure devotion to Him, which takes the form of Islam or submission to Him. Such submission is not confined to the realm of beliefs and feelings; it must be translated into total obedience to Allah and a conscious implementation of His law outlined in His revelations. If we view the matter from this angle, we will find many people in all ages claiming to believe in Allah but at the same time ascribing Divinity to others. This they do when they implement a law which is in conflict with His law, and obey those who do not follow His messenger or His book, and when they derive their values, standards and morals from sources other than Him. All such actions run contrary to their claim that they believe in Allah. They conflict with Allah's own testimony that He is the only Allah in the universe...

Allah's control of the universe and His conduct of its affairs and of people's lives is always characterised by justice. Indeed, justice cannot be established in human life, which, in turn, cannot be set on its proper course as the rest of the universe where every single creature fulfils its function in perfect harmony with the rest of creation except through the implementation of the method and the way of life Allah has chosen for people, as outlined in His revelation. Otherwise, justice cannot be established, harmony cannot be achieved and there can be no interrelation between man and the universe.

What takes place, then, is injustice, conflict and total ruin. Throughout history, justice was established only during those periods when Allah's method was adhered to. These were the times when human life was set on a perfect and straight course like everything else in the universe. However, human nature being what it is means that human beings tend to waver between obedience and disobedience to Allah. They move nearer to obedience to Allah whenever His method is established and His law is

implemented. Wherever man-made laws are established, ignorance and shortcomings abound. A direct consequence of this is injustice in one form or another: an individual may do injustice to the community, or the community may be unjust to the individual, or one class tyrannises another, or one nation subjugates another, or one generation treats another with injustice. It is only Divine justice which remains free of any favouritism towards any of these. He is the Lord of all creation Who does not overlook anything on earth or in the heavens...

The oneness of the Divine Being requires that all submission must be to Him. There is nothing in people's minds or in their lives which is not subject to Allah's authority. The oneness of Allah means that there is only One Being who has the right to set values and standards for people, to require them to submit to Him, obey Him, implement the legislation He has enacted for them in all the affairs of their lives. There is only one faith, namely, pure submission to Allah alone, which is acceptable to Him.

When we state that the only true faith acceptable to Allah is self-surrender to Him, we mean true Islam. This is not merely a claim to be stated, a flag to be raised or a detached academic concept to be discussed which does not stir hearts or minds, or even a set of acts of worship such as Prayer, fasting and pilgrimage. This is not the sort of Islam which Allah describes as the only faith acceptable to Him. True Islam means complete obedience, total submission to Allah and the implementation of His revelations in human life, as will be stated presently in the same Qur'anic text...

AL-I IMRAN 23

Have you considered the case of those who have received a share of revelation? When they are called upon to accept the judgement of Allah's book in their affairs, some of them turn away and pay no heed. (23)

For they claim: 'The fire will most certainly not touch us save for a limited number of days.' They are deceived in their own faith by the false beliefs they used to invent. This, then, is the reason for people turning their backs on the judgement of Allah's book. It places them in total contradiction with their claim to be believers or followers of Divine revelation. They simply do not take seriously the notion of reckoning on the Day of Judgement. Nor do they consider as serious the administration of Divine justice. The import of their claim is that they will not suffer the fire except for a limited number of days.

How is this possible when they deviate from the most fundamental principle of faith which imposes on them the duty to accept the judgement of the Divine book in all matters? How can they make such a claim if they truly believe in Allah's justice, or even if they feel that they will definitely be raised

to Allah on the Day of Judgement? What they state is simply an invention which they themselves perpetrate, and by which they are then deceived: They are deceived in their own faith by the false beliefs they used to invent.

It is indeed a fact that believing seriously in meeting Allah cannot be combined with such a futile notion in respect to His justice and reward. No man can combine fear of Allah and punishment on the Day of Judgement with turning his back on Allah's rulings outlined in His book or the implementation of His law in human life.

These people of earlier revelations stand in the same position as those whom we meet today who claim to be Muslims but who turn their backs when they are called upon to implement Allah's laws in their lives. Some of them even go further than this and impudently claim that human life has nothing to do with religion. They say that there is no need to impose religion on the practical side of human life, or on economic, social, and indeed family relations. They, nevertheless, continue their claim to be Muslims. Some of them are so naïve that they believe that Allah's punishment will be limited to purifying them of their sins only and that thereafter they will be admitted into heaven. They ask in absolute naivety: "Are we not Muslims?" It is the same false belief which was maintained by such people of earlier revelations. They show the same conceit and they deceive themselves with the same false beliefs which have no foundation in the religion Allah has revealed. Both groups are the same in their rejection of the very basics of faith and in their isolation from its fundamental practical expression, namely, submission to Allah and total obedience to His commands in all affairs of life, which they receive through His messengers.

AL-I IMRAN 64

Say: "People of earlier revelations. Let us come to an agreement which is equitable between you and us: that we shall worship none but Allah, that shall associate no partners with Him, and that we shall not take one another for lords beside Allah." And if they turn away, then say: "Bear witness that we have surrendered ourselves to Allah." (64)

This universe, as a whole entity, is not set on its right course unless it is run by one Allah who determines all its affairs: **"Had there been in them [i.e. the heavens and the earth] any deities other than Allah, they would surely have been overwhelmed by corruption."** (al-Anbiya' 21/22) The most essential characteristics of Godhead, according to man, are: that He be worshipped, and that He lays down legislation and sets standards for people to apply in their lives. He who claims any of these for himself, claims in effect to be a deity alongside Allah.

Corruption does not spread on earth unless Divinity is thus ascribed to beings other than Allah. It is only when a human being enslaves others, claiming that he himself must be obeyed, or that he has the power to legislate and to set values and standards for human society that corruption becomes rife. Such an assertion is a claim of Godhead, even though the claimant may not state it in as many words as Pharaoh did when he cried: **“I am your lord, most high.”** (al-Nazi`at 79/24) To acknowledge such an assertion by anyone is to be an idolater or to disbelieve in Allah. It is indeed the worst type of corruption...

In all man-made systems, people enslave one another, and take one another for lords beside Allah. This happens in the most advanced democracies as well as in the worst types of dictatorship. Under all human systems, the authority to legislate and set values and standards is claimed by a group of people, in one form or another, who have the final authority. This group, which requires others to submit to its legislation, are the lords. They are acknowledged by the others as such since they allow them to claim for themselves the essential characteristics of Godhead. When people do acknowledge this authority for such a group, they are in effect worshipping them although they may not bow or prostrate before them.

It is only under Islam that man is free from such subjugation. He is free because he receives his values, standards, morality, systems, laws and legislation from Allah alone like everyone else who does the same. All people under the Islamic system stand at one level, looking up to one Lord Who is the Master of them all. None claims lordship over others. Submission to Allah, in this sense, is the Divine faith preached by every messenger Allah sent to man. When Allah sent His messengers to preach this faith, their task was to help people free themselves from subjugation to others, so that worship of Allah alone could be established. They were to help liberate people from the injustice inflicted by human beings so that they could enjoy Allah’s absolute justice. Those who reject the message of the Prophets are not Muslims, no matter how deceptively and persuasively they may try to describe themselves as such. For, **“In the sight of Allah, the true faith is [man’s] self-surrender to Him.”** That is indeed the meaning of Islam...

AL-I IMRAN 140

If misfortune befalls you, a similar misfortune has befallen other people as well. Such days [of fortune and misfortune], We deal out in turn among men. Allah wants to mark out those who truly believe and choose from among you such as [with their lives] bear witness to the truth. Allah does not love the wrongdoers. (140)

Every Muslim declares that he “bears witness that there is no deity save Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger.” However, he is not considered

a witness unless he gives credence to his declaration that there is only one Allah in the universe. This means that he accepts no legislation other than that which comes from Allah. The most essential characteristic of Godhead is to legislate and the most essential characteristic of worship is to accept and implement Allah's legislation. This declaration also means that a believer does not receive Allah's legislation except through Muhammad (pbuh), since he is Allah's Messenger. Every person who makes this declaration is required to strive hard in order to make sure that Allah alone is acknowledged as the only Allah by all mankind. The practical effect of this is to make the constitution Allah devised for human life, and which was conveyed to us by Muhammad (pbuh), the established constitution throughout the world. If the attainment of that goal means that a Muslim should die, he is then a martyr, or a witness, chosen by Allah to make this testimony and to win this noble position...

AL-I IMRAN 151

We shall strike terror in the hearts of unbelievers because they associate partners with Allah — [something] for which He has never granted any warrant. Their abode is the fire, and evil indeed is the dwelling place of the wrongdoers. (151)

They have attributed to Allah partners who have no authority or power of their own, because Allah has never bestowed any warrant on them...

The idolaters ascribe divinity to deities other than Allah. The very concept of polytheism is based on giving certain fundamental qualities to beings other than Allah. One of the most important of these qualities and attributes is the right to issue legislation which may affect any aspect of human life, and the right to establish values which people should implement in their community and observe in their behaviour. Also, the right to establish one's own power over others and to make other people submit to such legislation and implement such values is another aspect of practical polytheism. Offering actual worship to beings other than Allah is another of its aspects, which means, as we have already said, ascribing Godhead qualities to beings other than Allah...

NISA 13-14

These are the bounds set by Allah. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, him will He admit into gardens through which running waters flow, there to dwell forever. That is the supreme triumph. (13)

But whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, and transgresses His bounds, him

will He commit to the fire, there to abide forever; and shameful torment awaits him.
(14)

These two verses serve as further emphasis to the basic rule of Islam that makes it absolutely clear that the authority to legislate belongs to Allah alone. Any contravention of this rule constitutes disobedience to Allah and rejection of Islam altogether...

When Godhead and Lordship in the universe belong to Allah alone, all creatures must submit to Him and obey all His commandments. This means that they must follow the system and the constitution He has chosen for them. He alone can make that choice and He alone can legislate for people, giving them the values, standards, and the social systems to establish and maintain. No one else, whether an individual or a group, can share that authority with Him except on the basis of His law and constitution. That authority is the total sum and the practical result of Godhead and Lordship. When it is given to someone else, then submission and obedience are offered to beings other than Allah. The practical effect of that is the implementation of regulations, laws, values, and standards established by human beings without any reference to Allah's Book and authority. In such a situation, there can be no proper faith and no Islam. There can only be transgression and a total denial of the faith...

NISA 48

Allah will never forgive that partners are associated with Him. He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills. He who associates partners with Allah indeed contrived an awesome sin. (48)

We must not forget what we have explained in our commentary on verse 48, which says: **"Allah will never forgive that partners are associated with Him. He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills."** We mentioned there that the Jews were described as idolaters because they took their rabbis for Gods. They did not worship them as such. The fact that they accepted and obeyed what those rabbis legislated, under their own claimed authority and with no basis of Divine law, classed the Jews as associating partners with Allah. Thus, they were guilty of that offence which Allah does not forgive. He forgives every other sin, including cardinal ones, such as adultery, theft and drinking intoxicants. Thus, the whole issue rests on believing in Allah's absolute oneness, and that, as such, all sovereignty belongs to Him alone. Sovereignty is, after all, the central quality of Godhead. Within these limits, a person remains a Muslim and a believer. He may hope to have all his sins, including cardinal ones, forgiven. Once these limits are breached, the person who breaches them, in effect, associates partners with Allah, and this is something Allah does not forgive. Such is the basic condition of faith.

NISA 59

Believers, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those from among you who have been entrusted with authority. If you are in dispute over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you truly believe in Allah and the Last Day. This is the best [for you], and most suitable for final determination. (59)

In this short statement, Allah explains the conditions for being a believer and the boundaries of Islam. At the same time, He outlines the underlying rule of the constitution of the Muslim community, the basis of all judgement and the source of all authority. All these begin and end with receiving guidance from Allah alone, and, where there is no clear statement, to refer to Him in any detail that may arise in human life over which people may differ.

Sovereignty belongs to Allah alone in all human life and all its affairs, large and small. Allah has enacted a constitution and a law which He has embodied in His revealed Book, the Qur'an, and sent His Messenger to explain it to people. Allah's Messenger "does not speak out of his own desire: that [which he conveys to you] is but a [Divine] inspiration which he receives." (Najm 53/3-4) Hence, the Prophet's sunnah is part of Allah's law...

To obey Allah is obligatory. One of the essential elements of Godhead is that Allah enacts the law; implementation of this is, thus, obligatory. Believers are required to obey Allah, to start with, and to obey His Messenger, since it is Allah that has sent him with His message. Thus, obedience to the Prophet is part of obeying Allah Himself. Moreover, the Prophet's sunnah and his judgement are part of the Divine law that must be implemented. Whether a person is a believer or not is conditional on such obedience and implementation. As the Qur'an specifies: "If you are in dispute over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you truly believe in Allah and the Last Day." (Nisa 4/59)

The verse that gives the order to obey Allah and His Messenger also orders that those "entrusted with authority" must also be obeyed. However, these are clearly defined as the ones "from among you," i.e. from among the believers who meet the condition of faith and keep within the boundaries of Islam. This requires them to obey Allah and His Messenger, accept sovereignty as belonging to Allah alone and implement only His guidance. The text, as it is phrased, makes obedience to both Allah and the Messenger a basic, unquestionable duty. Obedience to people entrusted with authority comes as a corollary of such obedience to Allah and His Messenger. Obeying them applies to that which is known of Allah's law, that which is not covered by a statement of prohibition and that which is not subject to prohibition when referred to Allah's law.

The sunnah makes the extent of such obedience to those people who are "entrusted with authority" very clear: The Prophet says: "Obedience applies

in what is reasonably equitable.” (Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Both al-Bukhari and Muslim also relate: “A Muslim is required to listen and obey, when he likes or dislikes, unless he is ordered to commit what is forbidden. Should he be so ordered, then he must neither listen nor obey.” (Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim)

In an authentic hadith related by **Muslim**, the Prophet is quoted as saying: “When you are ruled by a slave who implements Allah’s Book, listen to him and obey.”

Thus Islam makes every individual in a position of trust with regard to Allah’s law and the Prophet’s sunnah. That trust covers his own faith, body, soul and destiny in this life and in the life to come. No individual, man or woman, is a sheep in the flock, one in the crowd, obeying orders from here or there. The law and constitution are abundantly clear, and the limits of obedience are also clear. The law and the sunnah to be obeyed are the same, thus giving rise to neither division nor confusion.

Such obedience to people entrusted with authority applies when we have definitive statements in the Qur’an or the hadith. Where no such definitive statement exists, and when we have something new arising as a result of new circumstances, and over which people may have differences of understanding and viewpoints — such matters have not been left hanging in the air, without the possibility of deducing rulings and judgements. In a short statement, the whole basis and operation of arriving at such rulings through scholarly discretion is laid down: “If you are in dispute over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger.” (Nisa 4/59)

What this means is that in such matters where a ruling is needed, these should be referred to whatever implicitly applies to them of Qur’anic and hadith statements. If no such text is applicable, then they should be referred to the general principles of Allah’s law and constitution. These are by no means fluid, confusing or ambiguous, as some people may suggest. Indeed, this religion of ours lays down clear, basic principles covering all aspects of human life, together providing a clear boundary which cannot be breached without any living Islamic conscience recognising the breach.

“If you truly believe in Allah and the Last Day.” (Nisa 4/59) Thus, obeying Allah and His Messenger, as well as those believers entrusted with authority and trying hard to ensure the implementation of Allah’s law, and referring what is in dispute to Allah and the Messenger, are all a condition and result of believing in Allah and the Day of Judgement. Faith does not come into existence unless this condition is fulfilled and its result comes into effect.

Following the previous admonition to fulfil trust and maintain justice, the verse, having explained the issue in such a conditional way, now reiterates it

in the form of an admonition that makes it genuinely desired: **“This is the best [for you], and most suitable for final determination.” (Nisa 4/59)** It is, indeed, best for you in this life and in the life to come, and it works to your own good in the final resolve in both lives. Great as it is that following this method ensures Allah’s pleasure and earns His reward in the life to come, it is not the only result. Additionally, it ensures the best results for both the individual and the community in this present life.

By following this constitution man reaps the whole benefit of a code of living devised by the Almighty, the Wise whose knowledge is perfect and absolute; a code free of human ignorance, desire and weakness. It is a code of living that favours no individual, class, nation, race or generation over another, because Allah is the Lord of all mankind who does not entertain any prejudice or favouritism for anyone.

This code of living has numerous advantages, among which is the fact that its author is the Maker of man who knows his nature and its real needs, his inner feelings and preferences, and how he responds and reforms. Allah does not need to go through trials and errors in order to learn what suits mankind. Far be it from Him to have any such need. When we follow this code of living, we spare ourselves the heavy price of following alternative methods that are bound to be defective, invented as they are by people who lack solid evidence. It is sufficient for human beings to exert their inventive talents in the material world, for this offers them very wide scope. On the other hand, human intellect will have much to do in trying to implement Allah’s constitution, recognising the areas that allow for analogy and discretion.

Another advantage is that its author is the Creator of the universe in which man lives. Thus, He produces for man a system that remains in perfect harmony with the laws that operate in the universe. This gives man an awareness that he is not in conflict with these laws. He only needs to understand and benefit by them. The Divine constitution will guide his footsteps and provide him with protection as he does so.

A further advantage is that this Divine constitution treats man with respect and honour, allowing him scope for discretion on the basis of scholarship that understands the texts and refers what is new to such texts and the principles they lay down. Hence, following Divine guidance will always be **“the best [for you], and most suitable for final determination.” (Nisa 4/59)**

NISA 60-65

Are you not aware of those who claim that they believe in what has been bestowed from on high upon you, as well as in what was bestowed from on high before you? They seek the judgement of Taghut (false Gods), although they are bidden to deny

them. But Satan wants to lead them far astray. (60)

When it is said to them, "Come to that which Allah has bestowed from on high, and to the Messenger," you see the hypocrites turn away from you with aversion. (61)

But how will it be when calamity befalls them [on the Day of Judgement] because of what their hands have done in this world? They would then come to you, swearing by Allah, "Our aim was but to do good, and to bring about harmony." (62)

As for them — Allah knows all that is in their hearts. So leave them alone, and admonish them, and speak to them a word to reach their very souls. (63)

We have sent every messenger so that he should be obeyed by Allah's leave. If, when they have wronged themselves, they would but come to you and pray to Allah to forgive them, and the Messenger prayed for their forgiveness, they would surely find that Allah is the One who accepts repentance, Merciful. (64)

But no, by your Lord! They do not really believe unless they make you judge in all disputes between them, and then find in their hearts no bar to an acceptance of your decisions and give themselves up in total submission. (65)

Now the surah refers to those who claim to be believers but who deliberately violate the central condition of faith, trying to refer their disputes to false Gods for arbitration, when they have been commanded to reject such false Gods. The surah wonders at their attitude and warns them against Satan's attempts to lead them far astray. It describes their reaction when they show their aversion to being called upon to adhere to what Allah has revealed and to follow His Messenger. The surah considers this an act of hypocrisy, and denounces their reference to false Gods as a rejection of faith. When their wicked plans end up in misery they try to justify themselves, but their justification is shown to be hollow and false. Nevertheless, Allah directs His Messenger (peace be upon him) to give them good counsel and to admonish them. The paragraph concludes with a clear statement of Allah's purpose in sending Messengers, which shows that they must be obeyed....

Whatever the case, our understanding of these verses is that they make absolutely clear the conditions for faith just as they define the meaning of Islam. We see in them a clear declaration that any one who wishes to refer to false Gods is a non-believer, because Allah has ordained that people should disbelieve in such false Gods. We also read in them an oath, by Allah, that such people will not attain to faith and will not be included among the believers until they refer their disputes to the Prophet for arbitration, accept his judgement and put it into force. This must be an obedience inspired by contented acceptance of his rulings.

"Are you not aware of those who claim that they believe in what has been bestowed from on high upon you, as well as in what was bestowed from on

high before you? They seek the judgement of false Gods, although they are bidden to deny them. But Satan wants to lead them far astray." (Nisa 4/60)

Have you seen this most amazing situation? Here are a group of people who profess to believe, but immediately negate their own assertions. They claim to believe in what has been revealed to Muhammad and in earlier revelations as well, but they will not refer their disputes for arbitration on the basis of such revelations. Instead, they want to refer them to a different system, seeking different rulings based on nothing that is contained in Allah's revelations. That means that they refer them to "false Gods", which claim for themselves an essential attribute of Godhead, and, hence, they apply no clear and accurate criteria.

Moreover, they do not do so out of ignorance or doubt. They know for certain that they are forbidden to refer to such false Gods, as the verse makes clear: "They seek the judgement of false Gods, although they are bidden to deny them." (Nisa 4/60)

Hence, their claims to believe in Allah's revelations cannot be true. The fact is that Satan tries to steer them far away from Allah's guidance, so that they cannot return to it at any time: "But Satan wants to lead them far astray." (Nisa 4/60)

This is, then, the cause behind their reference to false Gods and the reason for their violation of the essentials of faith. It is all stated clearly for them so that they may take heed and mend their ways. It is also made clear to the Muslim community so that it realises who inspires and supports such people.

The surah continues to illustrate their reaction when they are called upon to refer to what they profess to believe of Divine revelations given to Muhammad and earlier prophets: "When it is said to them, 'Come to that which Allah has bestowed from on high, and to the Messenger,' you see the hypocrites turn away from you with aversion." (Nisa 4/61)

The surah then portrays one specific aspect of hypocrisy in their behaviour. That is when they encounter misfortune or calamity as a result of their refusal to refer matters to Allah's revelations and to His Messenger, or their reference to false Gods. They are certain to come up with excuses, but these are only the excuses of hypocrisy: "But how will it be when calamity befalls them [on the Day of Judgement! because of what their hands have done in this world? They would then come to you, swearing by Allah, 'Our aim was but to do good, and to bring about harmony.'" (Nisa 4/62)

This is a sorrowful state of affairs. They return, aware of the enormity of their action, unable to face the Prophet with the true nature of their motives, yet ready with their false oaths that their action, which may have been arbitration according to pre-Islamic traditions, only aimed at achieving harmony in

society and serving its interests. These are the claims of all people who refuse to refer to Divine law and its way of life. They assert that they only want to avoid problems and difficulties and to achieve harmony between different groups and beliefs. Such are the arguments of the hypocrites and those who falsely assert to be believers...

Muslim community reads that Allah's messengers were sent to mankind so that they may be obeyed, by Allah's leave, not merely to convey Allah's message or to advocate the Divine way of life **"We have sent every messenger so that he should be obeyed by Allah's leave."** (Nisa 4/64) The Muslim community is also told that people will not be true believers unless they refer all their disputes to Allah's method and constitution. During the Prophet's time, this meant accepting the Prophet's rulings in all situations. After him, this means that reference must be made to the Qur'an and to the Prophet's sunnah. What is more, it is not enough that they should refer to him in order to be accepted as believers; they must accept his rulings without hesitation.

We then have a categorical and decisive statement, with Allah declaring an oath by His majestic self, that no one can be a true believer until he accepts the Prophet's rulings over all his life affairs and submits to them willingly, without any hesitation: **"But no, by your Lord! They do not really believe unless they make you judge in all disputes between them, and then find in their hearts no bar to an acceptance of your decisions and give themselves up in total submission."** (Nisa 4/65)

Again, we have here a reiteration of the conditions of faith and the boundaries of Islam. With such a statement from Allah, no one can argue about it in any way. Yet, in an attempt that cannot command any degree of respect, some people allege that this applies to a particular period of time, and to a certain group of people. By doing so, they betray their total lack of understanding of Islam and their complete failure to grasp the meaning of the Qur'anic text.

What this verse states is a fundamental Islamic principle, expressed in the form of a confirmed oath, without any qualification. This cannot be construed as meaning that the Prophet, in person, should judge in all disputes between believers at all times. His judgement, as referred to here, means a judgement based on his faith and implementation of the Divine law. Otherwise, Allah's law and the Prophet's sunnah would have no place in the life of the community after the Prophet had passed away. Such was the standpoint of the most hardened apostates at the time of Abu Bakr, who fought them hard. In fact, he fought them for something much less serious, namely their refusal to obey Islam with respect to its obligation of zakat payment and the Prophet's ruling on how it is paid after his death.

If it is sufficient as a proof of accepting Islam that people should refer their disputes to Allah's law and His Messenger's rulings. However, such referral

is not sufficient as proof of having faith, unless it is accompanied by complete satisfaction and total and reassured submission. Such is the meaning of being a Muslim and having faith [i.e. iman]. Let everyone consider how far it is true in his or her own situation before making any claims under this heading.

MAIDA 43-50

But how is it that they ask you for judgement when they have the Torah which contains Allah's judgement, and they still turn away? For certain, they are not true believers. (43)

Indeed, it is We who revealed the Torah, containing guidance and light. By it did the prophets, who had surrendered themselves to Allah, judge among the Jews, and so did the divines and the rabbis: [they gave judgement] in accordance with what had been entrusted to their care of Allah's Book and to which they themselves were witnesses. So, have no fear of men but fear Me; and do not barter away My revelations for a paltry price. Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed are indeed unbelievers. (44)

We decreed for them in it: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and a similar retribution for wounds. But for him who forgoes it out of charity, it will atone for some of his sins. Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed are indeed wrongdoers. (45)

We caused Jesus, the son of Mary, to follow in the footsteps of those (earlier prophets), confirming what had already been revealed before him in the Torah; and We gave him the Gospel, containing guidance and light, confirming what had already been revealed before it in the Torah and giving guidance and admonition to the Allah-fearing. (46)

Let, then, the followers of the Gospel judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed therein. Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed are indeed transgressors. (47)

And to you We have revealed the Book, setting forth the truth, confirming the Scriptures which had already been revealed before it and superseding them. Judge, then, between them in accordance with what Allah has revealed and do not follow their vain desires, forsaking thereby the truth that has come to you. To every one of you We have given a code of law and a way of life. Had Allah so willed, He could have made you all one community; but (it is His wish) to test you by means of that which He has bestowed on you. Vie, then, with one another in doing good works. To Allah you shall all return. He will then make you understand all that over which you now differ. (48)

Hence, judge between them in accordance with what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their vain desires and beware of them lest they tempt you away from any part of what Allah has revealed to you. If they turn away, then know that it is Allah's will

to afflict them for some of their sins. Indeed, a great many people are transgressors.
(49)

Do they desire to be ruled by the law of pagan ignorance? But for those who are firm in their faith, who can be a better law-giver than Allah? (50)

Allah (limitless is He in His glory) says that He alone is the Godhead and He has no partners. His laws, enacted for His servants, mankind, and which they have pledged to Him to implement, must be the ones to enforce in this world. All disputes must be adjudicated by prophets and rulers on the basis of these laws.

Allah (glorified be He) says that no argument or concession can be admitted with regard to this principle nor can any deviation, however small, be condoned. Nor can anything approved in a particular generation or by a particular community be accepted if it is in conflict with what Allah has decreed.

Allah (limitless is He in His glory) says that this whole issue is one of faith or unfaith, Islam or non-Islam, Divine law or human prejudice. No compromise or reconciliation can be worked out between these two sets of values. Those who judge on the basis of the law Allah has revealed, enforcing all parts of it and substituting nothing else for it, are the believers.

By contrast, those who do not make the law Allah has revealed the basis of their judgement are unbelievers, wrongdoers and transgressors.

Rulers can either implement Allah's law in total and, thus, they remain within the area of faith, or they may enforce some other law. In this latter case, all three descriptions of unbelief, wrongdoing and transgression apply to them.

If people accept Allah's rule and judgement, administered by rulers and judges, then they are believers. Otherwise, they are not. There is no middle way between the two, nor can any justification or claim of serving legitimate interests be admitted.

Allah, the Lord of mankind, knows what serves people's interests and He has enacted His laws for that very purpose. No law or system of government is superior to His. No servant of Allah may reject Allah's law or claim to have better knowledge than Allah with regard to what serves people's interests. If he makes such a claim, by word or deed, then he pronounces himself an unbeliever...

In this passage, the surah states first that all religions revealed by Allah agree that His law must be implemented and should govern all human life. It is the acceptance of this condition that makes all the difference between faith and

unfaith, Islam and other doctrines, Divine law and human caprice. This is clearly stated in the Torah revealed by Allah to provide guidance and light for mankind. "By it did the prophets, who had surrendered themselves to Allah, judge among the Jews, and so did the divines and the rabbis: [they gave judgement] in accordance with what had been entrusted to their care of Allah's Book and to which they themselves were witnesses. They have the Torah which contains Allah's judgement. We decreed for them in it: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and a similar retribution for wounds." (Maidah 5/43-45)

It is also endorsed by the Gospel Allah revealed to Jesus, son of Mary, which contains "guidance and light, confirming what had already been revealed before it in the Torah and giving guidance and admonition to the Allah-fearing." (Maidah 5/46)

"Let, then, the followers of the Gospel judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed therein." (Maidah 5/46-47)

It is further endorsed by the Qur'an which Allah revealed to Muhammad, His last Messenger, "setting forth the truth, confirming the Scriptures which had already been revealed before it and superseding them." (Maidah 5/48)

Muhammad is instructed by Allah to "judge between them in accordance with what Allah has revealed and do not follow their vain desires, forsaking thereby the truth that has come to you." (Maidah 5/48)

The ultimate verdict is thus pronounced: "Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed are indeed unbelievers... Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed are indeed wrongdoers... Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed are indeed transgressors... Do they desire to be ruled by the law of pagan ignorance?... But for those who are firm in their faith, who can be a better law-giver than Allah?" (Maidah 5/44-50)

In this way, the borders of faith and conditions of submission to Allah are clearly defined for both rulers and ruled. The criterion for rulers is to judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed, and for people to accept such a judgement and not to prefer anything else to it.

Stated in these terms, the issue is very serious indeed. Let us, therefore, try to identify the reasons for taking matters so seriously either in this particular passage or in the Qur'an as a whole. The first consideration is the fact that this whole matter is one of Godhead, Lordship and authority over mankind. These belong to Allah alone, who has no partners. Hence, it is a question of faith and submission to Allah or rejection and unfaith. This basic fact is explained throughout the Qur'an... As He is the Creator, the owner and the provider, Allah has all authority over the universe and man. He, indeed, has

the absolute power to do whatever He wishes.

To be a believer is to acknowledge that all these attributes belong solely and purely to Allah alone. To believe in Islam is to submit to the practical implications of these attributes. This is submission to Allah's law, which means, first and foremost, to acknowledge His Godhead, Lordship and authority. Refusal of Allah's law or the adoption of a different law in any small detail of human life is in effect a rejection of Allah's Godhead, Lordship and authority. Submission and rejection can be made by word of mouth or by deed. Hence, the whole issue is, as we have already explained, one of faith or unfaith, Islam or ignorance. Hence, the unequivocal statements made in this passage of the surah: **"Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed are indeed unbelievers ... wrongdoers ... transgressors."** (Maidah 5/44, 45 and 47)

The other consideration in this whole issue is the fact that Allah's law is inevitably and absolutely better for mankind than any manmade law. It is to this fact that the final verse in this passage refers: **"But for those who are firm in their faith, who can be a better law giver than Allah?"** (Maidah 5/50)

This total acknowledgement of the preferability of Allah's law in all stages and generations is also a part of the whole issue of faith or unfaith. No person can claim that the law enacted by a human being is better or equal to Allah's law at any stage of human life and claim at the same time that he is a believer or that he belongs to Muslims. By making such a claim, he is indeed claiming that he has better knowledge and superior wisdom than Allah in understanding mankind and conducting their affairs. Or he claims that certain conditions and needs have come up in human life and Allah (limitless is He in His glory) was unaware of them when He enacted His law, or was aware of them but did not provide for them in His law. Such a claim cannot be reconciled with that of faith and submission to Allah, no matter how insistently it is made.

Furthermore, the Islamic system is the only one which liberates man from subjugation by others. In all other systems, some people are subservient to others, and some look up to others. Only under the Islamic system do all people share the same position of being servants of Allah alone.

As we have explained, the most fundamental aspect of Godhead is legislation. When someone enacts legislation for a human community, he claims for himself the position of Godhead. People in that community become his servants instead of being Allah's servants. By giving the authority to legislate to Allah alone, Islam declares the liberation of mankind, or indeed, the rebirth of man. For man does not come into real existence unless he is liberated from subservience to another man and unless all human beings stand on an equal footing in front of the Lord of mankind.

This question which is fully discussed in the present passage is the top and most important question of faith. It is the question of Allahhood and servitude, justice, freedom, equality and proper existence.

The state of darkness, as used in an Islamic context, does not refer to a particular period of history. Rather, it refers to a particular condition, which may be present in any period of time. In essence, it signifies making law and legislation subject to human desires, not to the Divine system. It is immaterial whether these desires are those of an individual, a class, a nation or a generation. They remain human desires...

An individual may enact laws for a certain community and the result is that the community lives in darkness because his desire or his opinion becomes the law. A class may legislate for the rest of the community and the result is darkness enshrouding its whole life because the interests of that class become law, or let us say, the opinion of the parliamentary majority become law. The representatives of all classes and all sectors in the nation may legislate for themselves, and the result is the same darkness engulfing the whole of life, because the desires of human beings and their imperfect knowledge become law, since people cannot be without prejudices and cannot acquire perfect knowledge. Or it may be the people's view that is the law. And a group of nations may legislate for mankind, but the result is still the same, because the national goals of those nations, or indeed the views of the international community become law. In each one of these situations, the difference is only in words.

But when the Creator of individuals, communities, nations and generations, legislates for all, the result is a Divine law which does not favour an individual, a community, a nation or a generation at the expense of others. Allah is the Lord of all and He treats them all equally. He knows the nature and the interests of all and He makes His law serve all their interests and meet all their needs in absolute justice. When anyone other than Allah legislates for mankind, people become subservient, be that person an individual, a class, a nation or the international community. But when Allah legislates for mankind, they are all free and equal. They bow in front of no one whatsoever and they submit to Allah alone. This explains how serious this question of legislation in human life and in the life of the universe is.

“Should the truth be subservient to their desires, the heavens and the earth and all those who are in them will become corrupted.” (Muminoon 23:71)

A judgement according to laws other than that revealed by Allah means evil, corruption and turning away from faith, as the Qur'an itself says...

Indeed, the attitude of the Jews in such matters has always been consistent. Hence, the Qur'an asks this rhetorical question: **“But how is it that they ask you for judgement when they have the Torah which contains Allah's**

judgement, and they still turn away?" (Maida 5/43)

It is indeed a very grave and serious matter. They refer something to Allah's Messenger for arbitration and he judges between them on the basis of Allah's law. Moreover, they also have the Torah which contains Allah's judgement. Both judgements are identical, because the Qur'an has endorsed Divine judgements contained in the Torah. But nevertheless, turn their backs on Allah's judgement, either in their dissatisfaction or by not enforcing it. This rhetorical question is followed by an Islamic rule in such matters: **"For certain, they are not true believers."** (Maidah 43)

It is certainly not possible that a true believer will not submit to Allah's law or would not accept its rulings. Those who claim to themselves or to others that they believe and still refuse to implement Allah's law in their lives or who are not satisfied when it is enforced on them do indeed make false claims. Their attitude is described in this definitive statement: **"For certain, they are not true believers."** It is not simply a question of rulers not implementing Allah's law, but also a question of ordinary people not being satisfied with Allah's law and judgement. Such dissatisfaction takes them out of the ranks of believers, no matter how emphatically they claim to believe.

This Qur'anic statement confirms a similar one in the preceding surah, "Nisa", which states: **"But no, by your Lord! They do not really believe unless they make you judge in all disputes between them, and then find in their hearts no bar to an acceptance of your decisions and give themselves up in total submission."** (Nisa 4:65)

Both statements speak about the ruled, not the rulers. Both classify as unbelievers those who do not accept Allah's judgement as outlined by His Messenger and turn away from it.

As we have already said, the point at issue is that of acknowledging Allah's authority as the only Allah and His Lordship of mankind and the universe. To accept Allah's law and to be satisfied by its rules and judgements is the practical demonstration of accepting Him as the Supreme Godhead and the Lord of the universe. Rejecting the law and being dissatisfied with its judgement is a practical demonstration of disbelieving in Allah as such.

Such is Allah's verdict in relation to ordinary people who refuse to accept judgement in accordance with Allah's law. These have been described as unbelievers. Beginning with this verse, the surah speaks of rulers who do not judge in accordance with Allah's revelations. As we are soon to realise such judgements are endorsed by all religions revealed by Allah. The first reference is to the Torah: **"Indeed, it is We who revealed the Torah, containing guidance and light. By it did the prophets, who had surrendered themselves to Allah, judge among the Jews, and so did the divines and the rabbis: [they gave judgement] in accordance with what had been entrusted to**

their care of Allah's Book and to which they themselves were witnesses. So, have no fear of men but fear Me; and do not barter away My revelations for a paltry price. Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed are indeed unbelievers.

We decreed for them in it: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and a similar retribution for wounds. But for him who forgoes it out of charity, it will atone for some of his sins. Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed are indeed wrongdoers." (Maidah 44-45)

Human life cannot be properly organised unless it derives its faith, rituals, way of life and code of law from a single source which can exercise authority over consciences and behaviour alike. It must be able to administer reward and punishment according to its law in this life, and reward people in accordance with its own system of reckoning in the life to come.

Multiplicity of authority and source will only bring about results that are highly undesirable. If Allah's authority over consciences and rituals is recognised, but not over the law of the land, when reward in the Hereafter is according to Allah's law, but in this life it is subject to a different authority, then man is torn between two authorities moving in opposite directions. This leads to the total corruption of human life, as clearly and repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'an: "Had there been in heaven or on earth any deities other than Allah, they both would have fallen into ruin." (Anbiya 21:22)

"If the truth were to follow their caprice, the heavens and the earth and all those who live in them would have fallen into ruin." (Muminoon 23:71)

"We have set you on a way by which he purpose [of faith] may be fulfilled. Follow it, then, and do not follow the vain desires of those who are devoid of knowledge." (Jathiya 45:18)

Numerous references in the Qur'an show that early religions, some of which might have been addressed to small communities, contained all three mutually complementary aspects in a fashion suitable to that particular community's stage of development. At this point, such complementarity in the three major religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, is outlined, starting with the Torah: "Indeed, it is We who revealed the Torah, containing guidance and light." (Maidah 44)

As revealed by Allah, the Torah was the Book providing guidance for the Children of Israel, lighting up the way they should follow in life in order to lead them to Allah's pleasure. It contained the essence of monotheistic faith, and a variety of worship rituals, as well as a code of law: "By it did the prophets, who had surrendered themselves to Allah, judge among the Jews, and so did the divines and the rabbis: [they gave judgement] in accordance with what had been entrusted to their care of Allah's Book and to which they

themselves were witnesses.” (Maidah 44)

Allah revealed the Torah to provide guidance and light not only for hearts and consciences with the faith and rituals it outlined, but also to provide guidance and light generated by the code of law which regulated practical life and protected it in accordance with Allah’s system. The Prophets who had submitted themselves totally to Allah in absolute and complete dedication and who made no claim whatsoever to any attribute of Divinity, used to judge among the Jews on its basis. It was the law given to that particular community. So did the divines and rabbis, i.e. the Jewish scholars and judges, because they had been assigned the task of making sure that Allah’s law was implemented and they were required to be witnesses to its truth. They would fulfil this task through organizing their own lives in accordance with the directives and laws of the Torah and through implementing its laws within their communities.

Before finishing its reference to the Torah, the Qur’an addresses the Muslim community with regard to judgements in accordance with revelations in general and the opposition people may show to such judgements. It also outlines the duty of everyone entrusted with the implementation of Allah’s law and the punishment incurred by neglecting this duty: **“So, have no fear of men but fear Me; and do not barter away My revelations for a paltry price. Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed are indeed unbelievers.” (Maidah 44)**

Allah knows that enforcing His revealed law will be met with opposition in every period of time and in every community. Some people will not easily submit to it. Those who have power, tyrants and despots, and those who claim authority by right of inheritance will put up stiff resistance to it, because they realise that its enforcement will deprive them of the mask of Godhead they wear and acknowledge Godhead as totally belonging to Allah alone. This is done through depriving them of their claimed authority to legislate and to judge in accordance with their legislation. Resistance will also be put up by those whose material interests can only be served through exploitation and injustice. Allah’s just law will never endorse their unjust interests. Similarly, there will always be opposition to the implementation of Allah’s law by those who pursue their vain desires and wanton caprice. A Divine religion will always require them to purify themselves from such evil, and will eventually punish indulgence in them. Further opposition will be put up by other quarters who dislike to see goodness, righteousness and justice flourish.

As Allah knows that opposition to His law will come from all these quarters, and that those to whose care His message is entrusted must face up to this opposition and make all the necessary sacrifices for its sake, He addresses them in these words: **“Have no fear of men but fear Me.” (Maidah 44)** No fear of tyrants, exploiters or deluded masses should deter them from

implementing Allah's law. It is Allah alone that they should fear, because fearing Him dispels all other fear.

Allah also knows that some of those who are charged with the safekeeping and implementation of Allah's law may find worldly temptations too strong to resist. As they realise that people with power or money and those who seek all types of pleasure oppose Allah's legislation, they may flatter them in order to gain something of the riches and pleasures of this world. Professional clerics in all generations have yielded to such temptation, as did some Jewish rabbis. Allah addresses all those, saying to them: **"Do not barter away My revelations for a paltry price."** (Maidah 44) That is the price they may get in return for their silence or for their distortion of Allah's revelations or for issuing doubtful rulings. Indeed, every price offered is paltry, even if it includes all that is in this world. How could it be described otherwise when it is no more than a position, a salary, a title and a petty interest for which faith is bartered away and Hell is purchased?

Nothing is more wicked than treachery by a person who is in a position of trust and nothing is more vile than the distortion of facts by a witness. Those who are given the title "religious men" do commit such treachery and distortion. They remain idle when they are called upon to work for the implementation of Allah's revelation and they lift words out of their context in order to please those in power at the expense of Allah's revelation.

In a most decisive and definitive statement, Allah tells us: **"Those who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed are indeed unbelievers."** (Maidah 44) The generality of this statement makes it absolutely unrestricted to time or place. The ruling is definitive and applicable to everyone who does not judge according to Allah's revelations, regardless of where and in which period he lives.

The reason is the one we have already explained. A person whose judgement is at variance with Allah's revelations denies that Godhead belongs to Allah alone. A basic quality of Godhead is the authority to legislate as also His sovereignty. Whoever observes something other than Allah's revelations in his judgement not only rejects a particular aspect of Godhead but also claims for himself certain qualities of Godhead. If that is not unbelief, I wonder what is. For what use is a verbal claim of being a believer or submitting to Allah, when action denies such a claim?

Any argument about this definitive and decisive ruling is no more than an attempt to avoid facing the reality. To try to give this ruling a different interpretation is simply an attempt to lift words out of their context. Such arguments change nothing of Allah's clear and definitive judgement.

MAIDA 92-93

Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and be ever on your guard. But if you turn away, then know that Our Messenger's only duty is a clear delivery of the message [entrusted to him]. (92)

Those who believe and do righteous deeds shall have no blame attached to them for any food they may have eaten, so long as they fear Allah and truly believe and do righteous deeds, and continue to fear Allah and believe, and remain Allah-fearing and persevere in doing good. Allah loves those who do good. (93)

The implementation of Allah's law must be based in the first instance on submission to Him. This is, indeed, the very meaning of Islam. When man has shown his obedience, he can use his mind to identify, as much as he is able to, Allah's purpose behind His commandment or prohibition, whether this purpose is stated by Allah or not, understood by human intellect or not.

It must be remembered, however, that Allah, not man, is the final arbiter on whether something should be included in His law. When Allah has issued His decree, all arguments must stop. His decree must be implemented. If a decision is left to human intellect, people become the final arbiter on Allah's legislation. How then can this fit in with Allah's position as the ultimate authority, or with man's submission to Him?

MAIDA 104

When they are told, "Come to that which Allah has revealed and to the Messenger," they reply, "Sufficient for us are the ways we found our fathers following." Why, even though their fathers knew nothing and were devoid of all guidance? (104)

This long passage makes it clear that the authority to legislate belongs only to Allah who alone determines what is permissible and what is forbidden. Once this basic rule is established, it becomes applicable in all matters, regardless of their degree of importance. Anyone who claims the authority to legislate, by word or deed, is actually claiming Godhead, which belongs only to Allah Himself. In other words, he does not simply transgress the bounds of what is permitted, he also assaults Allah's authority. If any legislation is enacted on the basis of social traditions or people's views, then, in practical terms, these are preferred to what Allah revealed to His Messenger. As such, it constitutes a departure from faith altogether.

This passage provides a long list of legislation in different areas. Every piece begins with an address to those who believe. It is a reminder to them of their essential quality, which implies unqualified acknowledgement of Allah's

supremacy, sovereignty and authority to legislate. As such, it is an address which re-emphasises the basic quality of faith. This is coupled with a commandment to obey Allah and His Messenger and to beware of turning one's back on Allah's legislation. A warning against Allah's punishment is added, only to be followed with the prospect of earning His forgiveness and mercy. The believers are then told that they have their own way to follow. They are to pay no heed to anyone who does not submit to Allah's authority...

The human mind finds itself at a crossroads: it either maintains its proper nature with which Allah has equipped it or takes a different route. Should it take this way, it will recognise its one Lord, Allah, the Lord of the universe. It will submit to Him and accept His legislation, rejecting all other types of lordship. This means that it will reject any law other than Allah's. In this case, the human mind will find contact with its Lord to be so easy and worshipping Him to be so simple and clear. Alternatively, the human mind could lose its way in the maze of ignorance, facing darkness in every way and a myth at every junction. Tyrannical deities demand all sorts of worship rituals and sacrifices, which, in time, increase and multiply. An idolater will then forget their origins, but continue to offer them by force of habit. He will writhe under the demands of worshipping a multitude of deities, which will deprive him of all dignity that Allah has bestowed on man.

Islam declares that the authority to which all people must submit is the One Allah. In doing so, it liberates people from bondage to one another, restores man's dignity and frees the human mind from the fetters of rituals offered to multiple deities. Hence, Islam fights to eradicate idolatry in all its shapes and forms, pursuing it wherever it settles or manifests itself: deep in the human conscience, in worship rituals, in social practices, or in government and political systems...

AN'AM 19

Say: What is weightiest in testimony? Say: Allah is witness between me and you. This Qur'an has been revealed to me that I may thereby warn you and all whom it may reach. Will you in truth bear witness that there are other deities beside Allah? Say: I bear no such witness. Say: He is but one Allah. I disown all that you associate with Him. (19)

When the principle of referring to Allah for arbitration in this central issue has been established, the Prophet declares to the unbelievers that Allah's testimony is included in the Qur'an which He has revealed to him to warn them as well as everyone who comes to know of the Qur'an during the Prophet's lifetime or subsequently. Thus, the Qur'an is taken in evidence

against them and against all those whom it reaches, because it contains Allah's testimony in this central issue which provides the basis of human existence and universal existence as a whole. **"This Qur'an has been revealed to me that I may thereby warn you and all whom it may reach." (Verse 19)...**

The situation of mankind today is in many ways identical to what it was at the time when the Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). At that time, Islam, as a faith and a code of living was established on a central principle which required people to declare their acceptance that 'there is no deity other than Allah'. It is a declaration which has a special meaning as outlined by Rab'ī ibn `Āmir, a messenger sent by a Muslim army commander to Rustom, the Persian commander, before the two armies fought a decisive battle. The latter asked him what brought the Muslims out of their land. He answered: **"It is Allah who ordered us to march out so that we may help to free those who are willing to be freed from the worship of creatures to the worship of Allah alone, and from the restrictions of this present life to the expanse of its universal link with the life to come, and from the oppression exercised by other religions to the justice of Islam."**

That Muslim messenger was keenly aware that Rustom and his people did not consider their emperor, Khusraw, as the lord who created the universe, nor did they offer worship rituals to him. They simply acknowledged him as the sovereign who enacted laws for them. As such, they made themselves subservient to him in the particular sense that is diametrically opposed to Islam. Thus, the Muslim messenger informed the Persian commander that the Muslims were fulfilling Allah's orders to help free people from situations where one group of them worship another. They do so by attributing to rulers an essential quality of Godhead, i.e. sovereignty and what it imparts of authority to legislate, and implementing their legislation in practice, which is a form of religion. The mission of the Muslim armies was to free people so that they would worship Allah alone and enjoy the justice of Islam.

We are today in a situation similar to that which prevailed when the religion of Islam declared to mankind that 'there is no deity other than Allah'. Human beings have reverted to the worship of other creatures and accepted the oppression of different forms of religion and abandoned the principle of Allah's oneness in its true sense. It is true that some groups of people still make the declaration on mosque minarets that 'there is no deity other than Allah', but they hardly know its true sense, and as such, they do not mean it. Nor do they reject the claims of others to sovereignty, which is synonymous with Godhead. It does not matter whether individuals, legislative councils or nations claim the authority. For none of these is a God to exercise that authority. It is only the relapse of humanity into jāhiliyyah that assigns to such creatures the attributes of Godhead. As such, humanity no longer manifests a firm belief in Allah's oneness or total devotion to Him alone.

This applies to all mankind, including those everywhere in the world, who

repeat the declaration of Allah's oneness from minarets without giving it its true meaning or putting it into practice. These incur a bigger sin, one which is more severely punishable on the Day of Judgement, because they have sunk back into the worship of creatures after they have received proper guidance and embraced the true faith.

AN'AM 56

Say: I am forbidden to worship those beings whom you invoke instead of Allah. Say: I do not follow your whims, for then I would have gone astray, and would not be on the right path. (56)

In practice, the Arab idolaters did not only worship idols. They also associated jinn, angels and human beings as partners with Allah. The partnership they ascribed to human beings manifested itself only in giving those human beings the authority to legislate. They set for them their norms and traditions and arbitrated in their disputes, in accordance with the prevailing customs and what they thought fit. We need, then, to look at how this is described in Islamic terminology. Islam considers all this as a form of idolatry. When human beings are given the authority to regulate people's affairs in accordance with their own legislation, they are actually considered equal to Allah. This is as strongly forbidden in Islam as any actual prostration before idols. Both actions are manifestations of polytheistic beliefs. Both ascribe divinity to beings other than Allah.

AN'AM 62

They are then brought back to Allah, their true Lord Supreme. Indeed, His alone is all judgement; and He is most swift in reckoning. (62)

He is indeed our true Lord, while all other deities are false. It is He who has originated us and given us our lives, keeping us all the time under His unfailing supervision. He then gathers us back to Him for final judgement: *"Indeed, His alone is all judgement; and He is most swift in reckoning."* (Verse 62) It is He alone who reckons and judges. Both His judgement and reward are readily delivered. The reference to His speed here is meant to make us feel that we are not given even a short period of grace before we are held to account.

This sort of image which is outlined by the basic Islamic concept of life, death, resurrection, reckoning and reward, is sufficient to ensure that a

Muslim acknowledges without hesitation Allah's authority to rule over people's lives on earth. The reckoning, reward and judgement in the hereafter are based on what people actually do in this life. People cannot be held to account for what they do here in this world unless they are given a law which details for them what is lawful and what is forbidden. This explains the need for a single authority over both this life and the life to come.

When a law other than that of Allah's is enforced in this world, how can people be judged in the hereafter? According to the law they implemented here? Or according to the divine law which they did not implement?

Human beings must realize that Allah will hold them to account on the basis of His own law. They must be aware that if they do not conduct their lives and establish their relationships as well as their worship, according to Allah's law, then this will be the first thing for which they have to account. They will be questioned why have they not chosen Allah as their Lord on earth, preferring instead to claim other deities? This means that they will have to account for denying Allah or associating partners with Him. This they do by following Allah's law in matters of worship but adopting a different law in their social, political and economic systems as well as their interactions, dealings and relationships. We know that Allah forgives whomever He pleases, but only that which is short of associating partners with Him.

AN'AM 114-115

Am I to seek for judge anyone other than Allah, when it is He who has revealed the Book to you, clearly spelling out the truth. Those to whom We previously gave revelations know that it is the truth revealed by your Lord. So, do not be among the doubters. (114)

Perfected are the words of your Lord in truth and justice. No one can change His words. He hears all and knows all. (115)

This verse comes in the form of a question asked by Allah's Messenger, denouncing the very idea of seeking anyone other than Allah for judgement in any matter whatsoever. It follows this with stating that the authority to legislate in all matters belongs indisputably to Allah alone. There is simply no one other than Allah to turn to for judgement in any matter of human life: **"Am I to seek for judge anyone other than Allah?" (Verse 114)**

This initial rhetorical question is supplemented by an outline of the factors which make turning to someone other than Allah for judgement an extremely

singular attitude. Allah has explained all things, leaving nothing obscure or confusing. There is absolutely no need for human beings to turn to any other authority to judge over any matter or question: **"It is He who has revealed the Book to you, clearly spelling out the truth." (Verse 114)**

This Book has been revealed in order to settle human disputes in all fairness. It outlines Allah's authority to legislate and explains what Godhead means practically. Moreover, this Book sets forth, in detail, the basic principles which serve as the foundation for the Islamic constitution regarding human life. It also includes detailed rulings for those questions which Allah wants to settle, regardless of the economic and scientific progress of any human community. Together, these give the revealed Book its status, removing any need to refer to anyone other than Allah for judgement on any matter of life. This is what Allah states in His Book. Let anyone, then, claim that during a particular stage of development, mankind does not find this Book sufficient for their purposes. But he should also say in conjunction with this claim that he does not believe in this religion, and that he rejects what the Lord of this universe states...

The fact is that the people of earlier revelations continue to realize that the Qur'an is revealed by Allah and that the strength of Islam comes from the fact that there is nothing in the Qur'an but the truth. Knowing all this, they continue in their unabating war against this religion and its Book. This war is most determined when it comes to the attempt to usurp Allah's authority to legislate by abandoning the law of the Qur'an and replacing it with man-made laws. In this way, someone other than Allah is called upon for judgement. The end result is that Allah's Book is not implemented and faith disappears. It is to this end that the people of earlier revelations, be they Crusaders or Zionists, support every system and government which aims to change the character of the land of Islam, distinguished by its people's submission to Allah alone and their implementation of the law outlined in His Book...

The surah then tells us that Allah's decisive word has been passed and it cannot be altered by human efforts, no matter what means they employ:

"Perfected are the words of your Lord in truth and justice. No one can change His words. He hears all and knows all." (Verse 115)

Indeed, Allah's word is perfect. Whatever He says is the truth and whatever ruling or legislation He pronounces is just. Hence, no one else may say anything different whether it relates to faith, concepts, principles, values, law, custom or tradition. No one may amend His rulings or revise them. Indeed, He hears everything His servants say and He knows their every intention. He knows what is good for them and what establishes their life on the right

basis: **“He hears all and knows all.” (Verse 115)**

AN’AM 119

And why should you not eat of that over which Allah’s name has been pronounced when He has clearly spelled out to you what He has forbidden you (to eat) unless you are driven to do so by sheer necessity? Many people lead others astray by their errant views and lack of knowledge. Your Lord is fully aware of those who transgress. (119)

These statements directly addressed a major issue in Arabian society. The unbelievers used to forbid themselves the eating of certain animals which Allah had made lawful, and they made lawful certain animals which Allah had forbidden. They claimed that their action relied on Allah’s legislation. Hence, the surah gives its verdict concerning those who made false claims and who sought to exercise an authority that belongs to Allah alone. It states that what they legislated was a manifestation of their own vain desires, one based on total ignorance. They led people astray by the laws they issued and usurped Allah’s authority to legislate: **“Many people lead others astray by their errant views and lack of knowledge. Your Lord is fully aware of those who transgress.” (Verse 119)**

They are then commanded to abandon all sin, whether open or secret. Part of that sin was to lead people astray with vain desires and errant views, all totally baseless. They actually compelled them to implement laws that Allah had not promulgated, falsely claiming that these were divine laws. They are, therefore, warned against this grave sin: **“Abstain from all sin, be it open or secret. Those who commit sins will be requited for what they have committed.” (Verse 120)**

AN’AM 143-144

Of cattle you have eight in [four] pairs: a pair of the sheep and a pair of the goats. Say: Is it the two males that He has forbidden, or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? Tell me plainly if you are men of truth. (143)

And, likewise, a pair of camels and a pair of oxen. Say: Is it the two males that He has forbidden, or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? Is it, perchance, that you were witnesses when Allah gave you these commandments? Who could be more wicked than one who, without any real knowledge, invents lies about Allah in order to lead people astray? Allah does not guide the wrongdoers. (144)

Thus all legislation must come from the same source. Since they falsely claimed that their laws enjoyed the backing of Allah's authority, they are immediately given a very stern warning: *"Who could be more wicked than one who, without any real knowledge, invents lies about Allah in order to lead people astray? Allah does not guide the wrongdoers."* (Verse 144)

There can be no one more unjust or wicked than a person who invents a law which is not sanctioned by Allah and then claims that it is Allah's law in order to lead people astray. Such a person has no real knowledge. He only relies on his own conjecture or desire. Such people can never receive Allah's guidance, because they have severed themselves from all means of guidance. They have attributed partners to Allah without His approval. *Allah does not grant guidance to those who are wrongdoers.*

AN'AM 164

Say: Am I, then, to seek a lord other than Allah, when He is the Lord of all things? Whatever wrong any human being commits rests upon himself alone. No one shall be made to bear the burden of another. In time, to your Lord you all must return; and then He will tell you the truth of all that over which you were in dispute. (164)

And as we have said, this last beat in the surah addressing the question of sovereignty and legislation is in full harmony with the early part of the surah where the issue addressed was that of faith. We see this clearly in verses like these: *"Say: 'Am I to take for my master anyone but Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, who gives nourishment to all and Himself needs none?' Say: 'I am commanded to be the first of those who surrender themselves to Allah, and not to be among those who associate partners with Him.' Say: 'Indeed I would dread, were I to disobey my Lord, the suffering of an awesome day. He who is spared that shall have received His grace. This will be a manifest triumph.'"* (Verses 14-16)

A'RAF 54

Your Lord is Allah who has created the heavens and the earth in six aeons, and is established on the throne. He covers the day with the night in swift pursuit. The sun, the moon and the stars are made subservient to His command. Surely all creation and all authority belong to Him. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (54)

...It is He who has made the sun, the moon and the stars subservient to His will and He is the Creator and the controller of all. It is He, then, who is worthy of being "your Lord", giving you sustenance. He gives you the

system which ensures your unity and the legislation which settles your disputes. To Him belongs all creation and all authority. Since He is the only Creator, He is also the only one who has any authority. It is this question of Godhead, Lordship and sovereignty, as well as the fact that all belong to Allah alone which constitute the theme of this passage, and indeed the whole surah. Its correlative is the question of submission by human beings to Allah and their implementation of His law in their lives...

A'RAF 191-192

Do they associate with Him those that can create nothing, while they themselves have been created, (191)

and neither can they give them any support nor can they even help themselves. (192)

It is only the Creator who deserves to be worshipped. The partners they associate with Allah can create nothing. Indeed, they themselves are created. How can they be raised to the status of deities? How come they assign to those deities a portion of themselves and their children? Power and authority are amongst the most essential attributes of Godhead. The One who can support His servants and protect them with His power is the One who deserves to be worshipped. All their alleged deities are powerless and without authority. How can they give them support when they cannot even help themselves? How are they to be treated as partners with Allah?

The Arabic text uses the plural form that refers only to a group which includes human beings. This suggests that there are some human beings who are considered or treated as Gods. It has never been suggested that, in their pagan days, the Arabs used to have human deities whom they treated as Gods or to whom they offered worship. They only gave them the position of deities in the sense that they accepted the social laws they had enacted for them and accepted their arbitration in their own quarrels, which meant that they gave them the status of Godhead. The Qur'an refers to all this as associating partners with Allah. It equates it with idolatry that offers worship to statues and idols. Indeed, Islam treats both forms of paganism in the same way, just as the Qur'an considers those who accepted the laws and verdicts given to them by rabbis and priests as polytheists, associating partners with Allah. They definitely did not believe that those rabbis and priests were Gods or deities, and they did not offer any "act of worship" to them. Nevertheless, all such attitudes deviate from the concept of Allah's oneness, which is the cornerstone of the divine faith. That concept takes its clearest form in the declaration that "there is no deity other than Allah." This endorses what we have already stated, that the new forms of jahiliyyah are just as idolatrous as its old form.

A'RAF 194

Those whom you invoke beside ' Allah are Allah's servants, just like you. Invoke them, then, and let them answer you, if what you claim is true. (194)

Arab paganism was, as we have already explained, too foolish by the standards of any stage of the human intellect. Hence, the Qur'an tries to alert the Arabs' minds to their folly as they ascribed divinity to such deities. Those idols did not have feet with which to walk, hands with which to grasp, eyes with which to see, or ears with which to hear. Yet they themselves had these senses. How could they then worship statues made of stone that could not even do the things they themselves could do? Sometimes they considered these idols as symbols of the angels or of their own forefathers. Yet these were creatures like themselves who could not create anything or give support to anyone, because they themselves are created and cannot help themselves...

TAWBA 31

They make of their rabbis and their monks, and of the Christ, son of Mary, lords besides Allah. Yet they have been ordered to worship none but the One Allah, other than whom there is no deity. Exalted be He above those to whom they ascribe divinity. (31)

According to the Qur'an and the Prophet's interpretation, worship means the following of the law. The Jews and the Christians did not make their rabbis and monks as lords in the sense that they treated them as Gods or that they offered their worship rituals to them. Yet Allah describes them in this verse as 'associating partners with Him' and, in a later verse in the surah, as 'unbelievers' only because they followed the laws they devised for them. This alone, regardless of beliefs and rituals, is sufficient to make anyone who does it a person who associates partners with Allah, which takes him out of faith altogether and puts him in the category of unbelievers...

Polytheism, or idolatry, comes into being merely by assigning the authority to legislate to anyone other than Allah, even though this is not accompanied by a belief that such a legislator is a deity or by offering worship rituals to it...

The religion of truth which is the only one that is acceptable to Allah from any human being is 'self surrender'. Such surrender is manifested by implementing Allah's law, after having believed in His oneness, and offering worship to Him alone. If people are to implement a law other than that of Allah, then what Allah has said about the Jews and the Christians will apply to them as well. In other words, they would be idolaters and unbelievers, no matter how emphatically they assert that they believe in Allah...

The most essential meaning of 'religion' is 'to submit and to follow'. This is most clearly evidenced by following the law as it is proven by offering worship. The matter is very serious. It admits no ambiguity of the sort that considers people who follow laws other than Allah's law, without being compelled to do so, as believers and as Muslims, simply because they profess to believe in Allah and because they offer their worship to Him.

This ambiguity is perhaps the most serious threat to this religion of Islam at the present time. It is the worst weapon levelled at it by its enemies who depict some people and situations as Muslim and Islamic, even though these people are similar to the ones Allah describes as unbelievers taking as lords beings other than Allah and turning away from the religion of truth. If the enemies of this religion try to associate such people and situations with Islam, then it is the duty of the advocates of Islam to deny them that description and to uncover their reality. They would thus show them as they are: people who do not believe in Allah's oneness and who take for themselves lords other than Allah when *"they have been ordered to worship none but the One Allah, other than whom there is no deity. Exalted be He above those to whom they ascribe divinity."* (Verse 31)

YUNUS 3

Your Lord is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and established Himself on the Throne, regulating and governing all that exists. There is none who may intercede with Him unless He first grants leave for that. That is Allah, your Lord: so worship Him alone. Will you not then keep this in mind? (3)

This, the question of Lordship, is the main issue of faith. The unbelievers did not seriously deny the concept of Godhead. They acknowledged Allah's existence — for human nature cannot entirely reject the basic concept of Allah except in few highly unusual cases — but they associated other deities with Him and to these they addressed their worship. In some cases, the unbelievers considered their false deities to be intermediaries who could bring them closer to Allah. Others thought they could give themselves certain powers which belong to Allah alone, thereby enacting legislation which Allah had not sanctioned.

YUNUS 59

Say: 'Do but consider all the means of sustenance that Allah has bestowed on you! Some of it you then made unlawful, and some lawful.' Say: 'Has Allah given you leave to do so, or do you fabricate lies against Allah?' (59)

Indeed it is the main aspect of translating belief into reality. To acknowledge that Allah is the One who creates and sustains entails that He is the One to be worshipped and the One who determines all matters relating to human life. These include the means of sustenance Allah has provided. The unbelievers in Arabia acknowledged Allah as the Creator and the Provider of sustenance, -as do some who call themselves Muslims today. Like these latter-day self-styled Muslims, those unbelievers also gave themselves the authority to prohibit part of what Allah gave them and to make others lawful. In this way then the Qur'an paints them as both contrary and idolaters. The same description applies to all who are guilty of such contradiction, no matter what labels they give themselves. Islam is not a title that people attach to their names; it is a belief with practical implications.

HUD 2

Worship none but Allah. I come to you from Him as a warner and a bearer of glad tidings. (2)

These then are the principles on which the whole structure of the Islamic faith is raised. Indeed, no religion can establish itself and delineate a complete way of life for mankind without first establishing these principles.

That all people should submit themselves to Allah alone is the central point in matters of faith. It is the point where people are either liberated from the shackles of myth, superstition and false authority or they continue to be enslaved by diverse deities, people who claim to be intermediaries between Allah and ordinary people, rulers and dictators who usurp Allah's sovereignty and authority to rule and legislate, thereby subjugating others.

No social or moral system, whether national or international, can be established on clear and well-defined principles, which are not subject to personal desire and distorted interpretations, unless the doctrine of Allah's oneness is clearly and precisely established. People cannot release themselves from the pressures of fear, humility and anxiety, and enjoy the true noble status with which Allah has favoured them unless the concept of Allah's absolute power and sovereignty is accepted without question, entertaining no rival claim, in any form, by anyone.

Throughout history the conflict between Islam and other systems, and the battle between truth and falsehood, have not been over the fact that Allah is the Lord of the universe who conducts its affairs and establishes its laws of nature. The conflict has always been over who is the Lord of mankind, who enacts their laws, conducts their affairs and to whom they must submit.

Tyrants of all colours and creeds have been usurping this right for themselves. By practicing it in life they subjugate people to their own power and enslave them. The divine messages and the Prophets, as well as the advocates of Islam, have always struggled to regain this usurped right in order to establish a society which acknowledges that only Allah has this right.

Allah has no need for anyone. His kingdom is neither increased by the obedience and worship of believers, nor is it decreased by the disobedience of anyone or by the tyranny of dictators. It is human beings who live in abject humility when they submit themselves to anyone other than Allah. On the other hand, they gain in dignity, nobility and honour when they submit to Allah alone and free themselves from subjugation to anyone else. Since Allah wants people to live in dignity and honour, He has sent His messengers with the task of returning mankind to the worship of Him alone and to liberate them from subjugation by their fellow men. This is for people's own good, not for the benefit of Allah who has no need for anyone.

Submission to Allah alone means the acknowledgement of His Lordship which, in turn, means that He is the master who can conduct their affairs by His legislation and commandment. This is the subject matter of Allah's book, as stated at the opening of this sūrah: *"This is a book, with verses which have been perfected and distinctly spelled out, bestowed on you by One who is Wise, All-aware. Worship none but Allah."* (Verses 1-2) Indeed this is the meaning of worship as recognized by the Arabs in whose language the Qur'ān was revealed...

HUD 59

Such were the `Ad. They denied their lord's revelations, disobeyed His messengers, and followed the bidding of every arrogant, unrestrained tyrant. (59)

They disobeyed only one messenger, but since all Allah's messengers preach the same message, whoever disobeys one messenger, disobeys them all. The use of the plural in reference to revelations and messengers also has a stylistic purpose. Their crime is made to look much more horrid and ghastly when we realize that they have denied revelations and disobeyed messengers. *"And followed the bidding of every arrogant, unrestrained tyrant."* (Verse 59)

They are required to liberate themselves from the tyranny of anyone who wants to impose authority over them. They must think for themselves and exercise their freedom of choice. They cannot just waste their humanity by accepting the role of blind followers.

Thus we realize that the issue between Hūd and the `Ād was that of Allah's Lordship over all people, and their submission to Him alone. It is the issue of sovereignty and to whom it belongs. Who is the Lord to whom all must submit? This is apparent in Allah's words: "Such were the `Ād. They denied their Lord's revelations, disobeyed His messengers, and followed the bidding of every arrogant, unrestrained tyrant."

They were punished for their disobedience of Allah's messenger and their following of the bidding of tyrants. Islam, on the other hand, requires its followers to obey Allah's messengers, because their bidding comes from Him. At the same time Muslims must also disobey all tyrants. This is indeed the parting of the ways between Islam and jāhiliyyah, submission to Allah and denial of His message.

It is abundantly clear, then, that the message of Allah's unity emphasizes first of all the need to liberate man from submission to anyone other than Allah, and the need to revolt against the authority of all tyrants who impose themselves as Gods. It considers the forfeiture of freedom by the blind following of tyrants, a capital crime of disbelief in and denial of Allah. Such perpetrators deserve to be destroyed in this life and punished in the hereafter. Allah has created man to be free, to worship no fellow creature and to maintain his freedom in the face of any chief or leader. This is the essence of man's nobility. If man does not protect it, he deserves no kindness from Allah. No community of people can claim to have any degree of dignity and humanity when they submit themselves to anyone other than Allah. Those who do submit to their fellow creatures, and obey their legislation, cannot be excused. After all, they are the majority while the tyrants are a small minority. If the majority want to liberate themselves they need only to sacrifice a small portion of what they actually sacrifice at the altars of tyrants. They willingly pay them the tax of being humiliated in every respect.

Let us pause here a little to reflect briefly on the history of Hūd with his people, within the context of the sūrah. The Qur'ān gives this account of the history of the age-old call to Islam in order to provide landmarks for the advocates of Islam throughout all generations. These landmarks are not only relevant to the first Muslim community, the first to be addressed by the Qur'ān, and the first to make it its operational guide as opposed to jāhiliyyah, but also to every Muslim community which stands up to jāhiliyyah anywhere in the world, at any time. This is what makes the Qur'ān the permanent constitution of the Islamic message and the manual of every Islamic movement.

Every time the Qur'ān mentions the approach of any messenger sent by Allah to any people, it quotes the messenger as saying: 'My people, worship Allah

alone. You have no deity other than Him. I have repeatedly stated that 'worship Allah alone' means total submission to Him alone in all matters which relate to this life or to the hereafter.

This is indeed the original meaning of the word. The dictionary shows the word `abada [which we now use primarily to denote worship] as meaning: to yield, submit and to lower one's rank to another.

A mu`abbad road is one which has been leveled to facilitate travelling.

`Abbada is to enslave; that is, to cause someone to submit to another.

The Arabs who were first addressed by the Qur'ān did not confine the import of the term `abada to mere worship rituals. Indeed, when the Arabs were first addressed by this term in Makkah, no worship rituals had then been assigned to them. They understood it to mean that they were required to submit themselves to Allah alone in all their life affairs and to renounce submission to anyone else. The Prophet defined 'worship' in one of his pronouncements as meaning 'compliance', not as offering worship rituals. He was answering `Ādī ibn Hātim's question about the Jews and the Christians and their treatment of their rabbis and monks as Gods. He said: "Yes, indeed. They (meaning the rabbis and monks) made lawful to them what Allah has forbidden, and forbade them what Allah has made lawful, and they complied. This is how they worshipped them."

The term 'worship' has come to signify worship rituals since these are one form of showing submission to Allah. This form does not by any means, however, encompass the full meaning of 'worship'. When the clear meanings of 'religion' and 'worship' faded from peoples' minds, they started to think that people abandon Islam only if they offer worship rituals to anyone other than Allah, such as idols and statues. They believe that if they avoid this particular form of jāhiliyyah they are protected against atheism, polytheism or any other form of jāhiliyyah generally and remain Muslims who could not be deprived of this status. They would thus continue to enjoy all the privileges of a Muslim with regard to the protection of life, honour and property.

This is a blatant fallacy based on distortions of the word 'worship' which decides whether a person is Muslim or not. This term signifies total submission to Allah in all matters and all affairs. As we have already said, this is the linguistic meaning of the word and the specific definition of it by the Prophet. When the Prophet has so clearly defined a certain term, no one can provide any other definition.

I have stated this very important concept in this commentary, *In the Shade of the Qur'ān*, and in all the works Allah has enabled me to write about the

nature of Islam and its method of operation. In the story of the Prophet Hūd, as given in this sūrah, we have a statement which defines the real issue of contention between Hūd and his people, the faith he preached, based on submission to Allah alone, and the jāhiliyyah they practised. It defines very clearly what he meant when he said: **“My people, worship Allah alone. You have no deity other than Him.”** He certainly did not mean to tell his people not to offer worship rituals to anyone other than Allah, as imagined by those who give the term ‘worship’ the very narrow meaning of rituals. He meant total submission to Allah alone and the rejection of any false God or tyrant. The crime for which the `Ād, Hūd’s people deserved to be punished, and to be pursued by a curse in this life and in the life to come, was not merely the offering of worship rituals to someone other than Allah. It was rather that **“they denied their Lord’s revelations, disobeyed His messengers, and followed the bidding of every arrogant, unrestrained tyrant.” (Verse 59)**

Their denial of Allah’s revelations is manifest in their disobedience of His messengers and their following of arrogant tyrants. All these actions refer to the same thing. When any people disobey Allah’s commands, they do indeed deny Allah’s revelations and disobey His messengers. They thus go beyond the pale of Islam into polytheism. We have already shown that Islam, in its broad sense, is the original status with which human life on earth started. It is indeed the faith brought by Adam when he fell from heaven and was put in charge of this earth. It is the faith Noah reestablished on earth as he disembarked after the floods. People, however, will continue to deviate from Islam and sink back into jāhiliyyah until the call of Islam is successful in bringing them back to Islam. The cycle has continued until the present time.

Indeed, had the true essence of worship been the mere offering of worship rituals, it would not have warranted the sending of all Allah’s messengers. It would not have warranted the great efforts exerted by those Prophets (peace be upon them all) and the hard suffering to which the advocates of Islam have been subjected throughout the ages. Saving mankind, however, from submission to creatures of all sorts and returning them to submission to Allah in all matters is indeed worth that heavy price.

The establishment of the oneness of Allah, the only Allah, Lord and Sustainer in the universe, and the only source of legislation in all matters, and the establishment of the only way of life acceptable to Allah are all aims which merit the sending of Allah’s messengers. They also merit the exertion of great efforts by the messengers as well as the endurance of all the suffering the advocates of Islam have experienced throughout history. This is not because Allah needs to achieve these aims: He is in need of nothing and no one. They are worthy aims simply because human life cannot be put right, reformed, elevated and become worthy of man without the establishment of the faith based on Allah’s oneness.

YUSUF 40

Those you worship instead of Him are nothing but names you and your fathers have invented, and for which Allah has given no sanction from on high. All judgement rests with Allah alone. He has ordained that you should worship none but Him. This is the true faith, but most people do not know it. (40)

Yusuf seizes the opportunity to speak to the prisoners about his faith, which is the true faith. The fact that he is in prison does not exempt him from his duty to preach the true faith and to criticize any situation that assigns lordship to human rulers. For submission to such rulers means that they usurp the rights of lordship and become pharaohs...

Judgement and authority belong to no one other than Allah. It is He who is the Godhead, with authority to legislate and judge. Indeed, sovereignty, belongs to Him, for sovereignty is one of Allah's basic attributes. Whoever claims any right to it is indeed disputing Allah's power, whether the claimant be an individual, a class, a party, an organization, a community or an international organization representing mankind. Anyone who claims this very basic attribute of Allah's for himself disbelieves in Allah. His disbelief is in the form of denying a part of faith which is essentially and universally known as a fact.

Usurping the rights of sovereignty which belong to Allah alone does not come in one form only. For a person to claim the basic characteristic of Godhead, which is sovereignty, he need not be so crude as to say, 'I know no Allah whom you may worship other than myself,' or, 'I am your Lord, the Most High,' as Pharaoh did. He actually claims these rights disputing Allah's authority when he starts to derive laws from any source other than Allah's law, declaring that the source of power and authority belongs to some institution or being other than Allah. Even when that institution is the whole nation or all humanity, the result is the same. In the Islamic system, the nation selects the ruler, giving him the authority to govern in accordance with Allah's law. The nation, or the community, is not the source of sovereignty which enacts the law and gives it its power. The source of sovereignty is Allah. Many are those who confuse the exercise of power and its source. What we say is that human beings, in their total aggregate, do not have the right of sovereignty. They only implement what Allah has legislated. What He has not legislated has no legitimacy. It does not carry Allah's sanction.

Yusuf (peace be upon him) justifies his statement that all sovereignty belongs to Allah alone by saying: *"All judgement rests with Allah alone. He has ordained that you should worship none but Him."* (Verse 40) We cannot understand this justification as the Arabs did at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān unless we understand the meaning of 'worship' which can only be

offered to Allah.

The meaning of the verb, `abada, or 'to worship' in Arabic is 'to submit or surrender'. In the early days of Islam it never meant, in Islamic terminology, only 'to offer worship rituals'. In fact none of the worship rituals was as yet imposed as a duty. So the statement was rather understood in the manner it was meant linguistically, and this later became its Islamic meaning. What it meant then was submission to Allah alone, and obeying His orders and commands, whether they related to worship rituals, moral directives or legal provisions. To submit to Allah in all these was the essence of worship which must be addressed to Allah alone. It could never be addressed to any of His creatures.

When we understand the meaning of worship in this light, we understand why Yusuf stated that worship can only be addressed to Allah as his justification for saying that all judgement and sovereignty belong to Him alone. Submission to Allah will not become a reality if judgement and sovereignty belong to someone else. This applies to matters where Allah's will is done by the laws of nature which Allah has set in operation in the universe, and to matters where human beings have a choice with regard to their actions and practices. True submission to Allah applies in both areas.

Once more we say that to dispute Allah's right of sovereignty takes the disputant out of the religion of Islam altogether. This is a basic rule of Islam that is essentially known to all. This is because disputing Allah's right and authority means a rejection of worshipping Him alone. It is essentially an act of associating partners with Allah, which means that those who dispute Allah's rights of sovereignty are not Muslims at all. The same applies to those who approve their claims and obey them without rejecting, even mentally, their action of usurping Allah's right and authority. The claimant and those who obey him are the same in the Islamic view.

Yusuf (peace be upon him) states that the true faith is that which assigns all judgement to Allah alone in implementation of His being the only one to be worshipped. **"This is the true faith."** (Verse 40) This is a statement of limitation. No faith can be true unless it gives all sovereignty to Allah and makes this a practical implementation of worshipping Him alone.

"But most people do not know it." (Verse 40) The fact that they do not know does not make them followers of the true faith. A person who does not know something cannot believe in it or implement it. If people do not know the essence of faith, it is illogical to say that they follow it. Their ignorance is not an excuse for describing them as Muslims. Rather, their ignorance bars them from that characteristic in the first place. To believe in something presupposes knowing it. That is a basic, logical fact.

In a few clear words Yusuf (peace be upon him) outlines his faith completely,

showing all its constituent elements and shaking to the core the foundations of disbelief, polytheism and tyranny.

Tyranny cannot take place in any land without its claiming the most essential quality of Godhead, namely His lordship over people's lives. This is the right to make people submit to its laws and orders, and implement its ideology. Even if it does not say so in words, it actually practises it. Tyranny does not exist unless the true faith has been removed from people's thoughts and lives. For only when people firmly believe that all sovereignty and judgement belong to Allah alone, because worship belongs to Him, is there no room left for tyranny in their lives.

At this point Yusuf has completed his task of preaching Allah's faith to them, having attached it initially to the matter which preoccupied them. He therefore reverts to that point and interprets their dreams for them...

YUSUF 50

The King said: 'Bring this man before me.' But when the [King's] envoy came to him, Yusuf said: 'Go back to your lord and ask him about the women who cut their hands. My Lord has full knowledge of their guile.' (50)

The Qur'ān quotes Yusuf using the term, Rabb, or Lord, in its full meaning with regard to himself and to the King's messenger. The King is the messenger's lord, because he is his master whom he obeys, while Allah is Yusuf's Lord whom Yusuf obeys and submits to...

YUSUF 76

Thereupon, [Yusuf] began to search their bags before the bag of his brother, and then took out the drinking-cup from his brother's bag. Thus did We contrive for Yusuf. He had no right under the King's law to detain his brother, had Allah not so willed. We do exalt [in knowledge] whom We will, but above everyone who is endowed with knowledge there is One who knows all. (76)

Meanwhile it comments on certain objectives behind the story while Yaqoob's sons and the onlookers come to themselves: **"Thus did We contrive for Yusuf."** (Verse 76) This means that it was Allah who devised this careful plan for Yusuf. **"He had no right under the King's law to detain his brother."** (Verse 76) Had he applied the King's law, he would not have been able to detain his brother; he would have only been able to punish the thief for his theft. He only could detain his brother by the fact that his brothers declared

their willingness to implement their own faith. This is the scheme Allah made for Yusuf, inspiring him...

We need to pause a little here to reflect on this fine Qur'ānic expression: **"Thus did We contrive for Yusuf. He had no right under the King's law to detain his brother."** (Verse 76) We note first that in the original Arabic text the Qur'ān uses the word *dīn* to refer to the King's law and system. This is the Arabic word for 'religion'. Its usage here defines the exact meaning of *dīn* in this context, which is, as we have just said, 'the King's law and system of government,' which did not punish a thief with slavery. That was the law of Yaqoob based on his faith. Yusuf's brothers accepted the implementation of this law, and Yusuf applied it to them when he found the King's drinking cup in his younger brother's camel-pack.

Thus the Qur'ān describes a system of government and law as *dīn*. It is a meaning all people have forgotten in these days of ignorance, including those who call themselves Muslims and those who follow un-Islamic systems, or *jāhiliyyah*. All of them limit the significance of *dīn* to beliefs and worship rituals. They consider anyone who believes in Allah's oneness and acknowledges the truth conveyed by His Messenger and believes in Allah's angels, revealed books, messengers, and in the Day of Judgement and the working of Allah's will, as a follower of the divine faith. They do this even though such a person may submit to, and acknowledge, the sovereignty of different lords besides Allah. The Qur'ān defines the King's *dīn* as his system of government and legal code. The same applies to Allah's *dīn*, which means His law.

The significance of the term 'Allah's *dīn*' has weakened and shrunken in people's perception to the extent that most people today limit it to beliefs and worship rituals. But this was not the case when this *dīn* was conveyed by Adam and Noah through to the days of Muhammad (peace be upon them all). It has always meant submission to Allah alone, being committed to His law and rejecting any other legislation. It also signifies that He alone is Allah in heaven and Allah on earth, and that He alone is the Lord of all mankind. Thus it combines Allah's sovereignty, law and authority. The difference between believers and unbelievers is that the first submit to Allah's law alone, while those who accept the 'King's *dīn*' submit to the King's system and law. Or they may take a mixture of the two, submitting to Allah in matters of belief and worship and to some other authority in matters of systems and laws. This is a basic concept of the Islamic faith and it is essentially known to all.

Some people try to find excuses for people on the grounds of their lack of understanding of the significance of the term 'Allah's *dīn*', which prevents them from insisting on, or thinking about, the implementation of Allah's law.

They say that their ignorance means that they cannot be classified as polytheists associating partners with Allah. For myself, I cannot see how people's ignorance of the truth of this faith puts them within its boundaries. To believe in a certain truth comes only after knowing it. How can people be said to believe in a faith when they do not know its true significance or what it means?

What concerns us is to say that people's beliefs today are not exactly the same as Allah's faith which signifies, according to clear Qur'ānic statements, the law and system He has revealed. Whoever submits to these belongs to Allah's faith, or dīn, and whoever submits to the King's system and legal code belongs to the King's dīn. There can be no argument over this. Those who are unaware of the true significance of this faith cannot be believers in it, because their ignorance includes its basic meaning. Logically, a person who does not know the basic meaning of a faith cannot be a believer in it.

It is indeed much better that instead of trying to find excuses for such people, we should try to make clear to them what faith, or dīn signifies. They will then be in a position to either accept or reject it, fully aware of the implications of their response...

Making the significance of their attitude clear to people, showing them that they are indeed following the King's dīn rather than Allah's faith, is also better for them as it may shake them to the extent that they decide to abandon their erroneous ways and follow Islam. That was indeed what Allah's messengers did, and it is what the advocates of the divine faith should do in all communities and at all times when they confront a state of jāhiliyyah.

FURQAN 43

Have you considered the one who makes his desires his deity? Could you, then, be held responsible for him? (43)

This verse is carefully phrased to paint a picture showing the psychological condition of a person who pays no heed to accepted standards or values. Instead, they only submit to their own desires and worship none but their own pleasure. They apply no standard, recognize no value, acknowledge no logic. Once their desire moves clearly in a particular direction, they follow like slaves submitting to a powerful master...

YA-SIN 75

They are unable to support them; yet their worshippers stand like warriors to defend them. (75)

Yet people do not give thanks. Some of them would even attribute divinity to beings other than Allah. *“Yet they have taken to worship deities other than Allah, hoping for [their] support. They are unable to support them; yet their worshippers stand like warriors to defend them.” (Verses 74-75)* In the past, such deities were statues, stones, trees, stars, angels or jinn. Such idolatry persists today in some areas of the world. Yet people today who do not worship such deities do not necessarily believe in Allah’s oneness. They may associate partners with Him, in the form of believing in some alleged powers other than His, or relying on other things. What we need to understand here is that polytheism can take different forms at different times and places.

The unbelievers used to worship these deities seeking their help to win victory, yet it was they who protected those deities against assault from others: *“yet their worshippers stand like warriors to defend them.” (Verse 75)* This was absurdity of the lowest order. However, in essence, most people have not gone far above this level of absurdity; only in form. Today, people who give tyrants the status of deities are not dissimilar to those who worshipped idols and statues. They are the warriors defending the tyrants and their tyranny, yet at the same time, they humbly bow before them. Idolatry is the same, whatever form it takes. Whenever the monotheistic faith suffers any deviation, idolatry and jahiliyyah creep in. The only thing that protects humanity is belief in Allah’s absolute oneness. He is the One Allah, to whom all worship must be addressed. He is the One to be obeyed and on whom all must rely.

“Let not their words grieve you. We know all that they keep secret as well as all that they bring into the open.” (Verse 76) This is an address to the Prophet as he confronted those worshipping deities other than Allah. He should not be concerned about them. Allah knows all about them and what they scheme. They represent no danger to any believer who places his trust in Allah.

ZUMAR 36-40

Is not Allah sufficient for His servant? Yet they would try to frighten you with those who are inferior to Him. He whom Allah lets go astray can never find any guide; (36)

whereas he whom Allah guides aright can never be led astray. Is Allah not mighty, capable of inflicting retribution? (37)

If you ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they will answer: 'Allah.' Say: 'Consider these beings you invoke beside Him: if Allah wills harm to befall me, could they remove the harm He has inflicted? Or, if He wills that mercy should be bestowed on me, could they withhold His mercy?' Say: 'Allah is enough for me: In Him place their trust those who have a trust to place.' (38)

Say: 'My people! Do all that may be in your power, and I will do what I can. You shall come to know' (39)

who will be visited with humiliating suffering and who shall be smitten by long-lasting suffering. (40)

It is reported that these verses were revealed as a result of the unbelievers trying to scare the Prophet, claiming that their deities, which he described in disrespectful terms, would be sure to harm him. They warned him that unless he desisted, their Gods would cause him much trouble. However, the significance of these verses is far broader than this. They describe the true nature of the battle between an advocate of the truth and all the forces that line up against him. They show the confidence and reassurance a believer feels as he gives these forces their true measure.

“Is not Allah sufficient for His servant?” (Verse 36) Yes, indeed. So, what can scare him when Allah is with him? What can generate any feeling of fear in him after he has taken the position of a servant of Allah and fulfilled the responsibilities that such a position confers? Who can doubt Allah's sufficiency for His servants when He is the Almighty who holds sway over all His creation?

“Yet they would try to frighten you with those who are inferior to Him.” (Verse 36) How could he be frightened when those inferiors do not frighten one who is protected by Allah? Is there anyone on earth who is not inferior to Allah? It is a very simple issue. It requires no argument or hard thinking. It is Allah opposed by some who are inferior to Him. This leaves no room for doubt concerning the outcome...

From 'In the Shade of The Qur'an'; Sayyid Qutb